

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES AND  
CHILD/FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS  
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TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsors

FROM: Maureen B. Staggenborg, Director  
Child Nutrition Programs

DATE: November 18, 2005

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #05C-06 and #03H-06– **Family Style Meal Service**

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) has long been recognized for its goal of providing nutritious meals to children and helping them establish good eating habits at a young age. Family style meal service provides a further opportunity to enhance this goal by establishing a pleasant eating environment that will support and promote mealtime as a learning experience. Family style meal service is encouraged in child care centers and family day care homes.

Family style is a type of meal service which allows children to serve themselves from common platters of food with assistance from supervising adults. It encourages supervising adults to set a personal example and provide educational activities that are centered around foods. This approach allows children to identify and be introduced to new foods, new tastes and new menus, while developing a positive attitude toward nutritious foods, sharing in group eating situations, and developing good eating habits.

Unlike cafeteria lines, unitized meals and pre-set service, the family style method affords some latitude in the size of initial servings because replenishment is immediately available at each table. Even when a complete family style service is not possible or practical, it may be useful to offer one or more components in a family style manner, particularly when smaller children are being served or when a new food item is being introduced.

The following requirements must be met in order to be eligible for CACFP reimbursement:

**CACFP Requirements for Family Style Meal Service**

1. A sufficient amount of prepared food, **including milk** must be placed on each table to provide the full required portions of each of the food components of the CACFP meal pattern for all children at the table, and to accommodate supervising adult(s), if they eat with the children.
2. The family style meal service allows children to make choices in selecting foods and the size of the initial servings. Children should initially be offered the full required portion of each meal component.
3. During the course of the meal, it is the responsibility of the supervising adult(s) to actively encourage each child to accept service of the full required portion of each food component of the meal pattern. For example, if a child initially refuses a food component or does not accept the full required portion, the supervising adult(s) should offer the food component to the child again.

If there are questions, centers sponsors may contact Susan Boyle at (860) 807-2074, Celia Cordero at (860) 807-2076 or Benedict Onye at (860) 807-2080. Homes sponsors may contact Maureen Staggenborg at (860) 807-2070 or Susan Bohuslaw at (860) 807-2073.